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The Place of Art in Our Time

As *"Woopie-doopy-wah-WAH!"* sweeps back from the audience, his comeback is out of trouble. In fact, their *hitting* that last WAH! proves that the final battle has been won.

But at what cost! The divorces, the detoxes...the humiliations at the hands of young women--and, lately, young men--so so much more. Part and parcel of being an artist in these times.

Too, in the last five years the *hasbeen* they didn't even recognize in the 7-11: swallowing that daily ignominy while hearing about "stars" in the chatter round the magazine rack. *Stars of Schmaltz* he remembers hissing to his Luria that very night she o'd in their filthy apartment.

But not he to linger over hurt, however massive and deep, as he sings out abnormally loud: *woopie-doopy-wah-WAH WAH WAH*

WAH WAH! to top the audience, most of whom cry as orange lasers cut their collective face into slices.

And now these long suffering and faithful fans wildly cheer the orchestra's crazy, scattered, discordant fragments which fizzle, only to strike up blatantly again: like *Watch! for we've all of us gone ape from all the art and love and pain.*

For always it was that last, brilliant WAH! that had distinguished him from Mok-a-Rauncha, The Kentucky Carload with Whistlebank, and from Tilly and the Splits. And the Blowjobs--let's not forget them. They came and they went. All of them.

And WHO is it at Carnege Hall? Never he, though, for cutting recriminations. If any of them are in the audience, he'll invite them onstange.

Fake punching them; then hug, and, finally. sing with them, dueling with the *wahs*. Playing, too, with the timing to suck in the crowd even more.

He knows in tearful, and sincere, insight as they stand to roar his name, their swaying bodies in the so-very-slowly-panning spotlights. Knows that love has finally saved him, saved his talent and his pure art from his darker self, and from this tasteless nation.